

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 AID-05 CEQ-01 CIAE-00 ERDA-05

COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 EPA-01 INR-07 L-03 NSF-01

NSC-05 NSAE-00 PM-05 USIA-06 OES-07 SS-15 SP-02

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FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1267

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

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CORRECTED COPY DUE PARTIAL OMISSION TEXT PARA 2

FROM USDEL

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: UN, OCON, UNEP, SENV

SUBJECT: UN DESERTIFICATION CONFERENCE: WAS IT TOLBA'S TRIUMPH?

1. THROUGHOUT, CONFERENCE WAS DOMINATED BY AUTOCRATIC, IRON-WILLED PERSONALITY OF SECRETARY GENERAL TOLBA PURSUED PRACTICES THAT PREVIOUS CONFERENCE SECRETARY GENERALS (E.G. MAGEED, FLORES) IN EXPERIENCE USDEL WOULD NOT HAVE THOUGHT OF, MUCH LESS DARED TO USE. FOR EXAMPLE, TOLBA INDICATED IN ADVANCE OF CONFERENCE CONSIDERATION (OF FINANCIAL MATTERS IN PARTICULAR) WHICH OPTIONS WERE "ACCEPTABLE" AND WHICH WERE "NOT ACCEPTABLE." HE FURTHER INDICATED THAT A "WATER CONFERENCE SOLUTION" WAS "NOT ACCEPTABLE" (I.E., DEALING WITH FINANCIAL ASPECTS BY REFERRING MATTER TO UN SECRETARY GENERAL TO BE STUDIED). IN ONE KEY INSTANCE HE REJECTED TRADITIONAL SECRETARIAT ROLE OF SEEKING TO ACCOMMODATE VARIOUS

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VIEWS IN CONSENSUS DOCUMENT, IN FAVOR OF CALCULATED EFFORT TO BRING US PROPOSAL CONCERNING INTERIM CONSULTATIVE GROUP TO A VOTE, IN EXPECTATION OF DEFEATING IT. IN LARGER (AND MORE POSITIVE) SENSE, HIS STRONG INNER VISION OF DESERTIFICATION AS A GLOBAL PROBLEM WHICH COULD BE ATTACKED EFFECTIVELY THROUGH UNEP AFFECTED VIRTUALLY ALL ASPECTS OF CONFERENCE.

2. IN VIEW OF USDEL, THERE ARE BOTH POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE ASPECTS TO TOLBA'S ROLE. ON POSITIVE SIDE, HE WILL BE ABLE TO INFUSE POST-CONFERENCE ANTI-DESERTIFICATION EFFORTS(NOW CENTERED IN UNEP) WITH DETERMINATION AND FORWARD IMPULSE MANIFESTED EARLIER IN PREPARATORY PROCESS. ON NEGATIVE SIDE, NARROW CONFERENCE APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS IS PROBABLY A HOLLOW VICTORY. SPECIAL FINANCIAL ACCOUNT, FOR EXAMPLE, EVEN IF ULTIMATELY ESTABLISHED, WILL PROBABLY REMAIN EMPTY SINCE WESTERN DONOR AND EE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES ALIKE INDICATED THEIR OPPOSITION TO IT. SIMILARLY, CONSULTATIVE GROUP, ALTHOUGH APPROVED IN FORM OPPOSED BY US AND WEO GROUP COUNTRIES, HAS NO BROAD MANDATE TO GO BEYOND LIMITATIONS FAVORED BY US. POSSIBLE OPENING AVAILABLE TO TOLBA IS TO SECURE FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS FROM CAPITAL-SURPLUS ARAB STATES. BUT THERE WAS NO PROSPECT OF THIS EVIDENCED AT CONFERENCE. IN FACT, THESE STATES (E.G. SAUDI ARABIA) ABSTAINED ON KEY VOTES CONCERNING FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS.

3. US DEL BELIEVES THAT EFFORT DEVOTED TO PROPOSAL WE PRESENTED ON CONSULTATIVE GROUP WAS NOT WASTED. US WAS CAST IN ROLE OF PRESENTING A POSITIVE PROPOSAL ON ONE OF KEY ISSUES IN CONFERENCE, NOT IN TYPICALLY NEGATIVE ROLE OF OPPOSING IDEAS ADVANCED BY

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OTHERS. UNDER MORE IMPARTIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, US PROPOSAL MIGHT HAVE CARRIED. IN ANY CASE, VOTE ON US PROPOSAL BROUGHT OUT DOUBTS AND HESITATION OF MANY COUNTRIES CONCERNING FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS; AND STATEMENTS BY US AND OTHER WEOG COUNTRIES FOLLOWING APPROVAL OF PLAN OF ACTION EMPHASIZED NEED TO GO FORWARD ON BASIS OF CONSENSUS.

4. THUS, IT MAY BE THAT BOTH TOLBA AND US WON SUBSTANTIAL GAINS AT DESERTIFICATION CONFERENCE. FOR TOLBA, CONFERENCE ESTABLISHED INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR FUTURE ANTI-DESERTIFICATION EFFORTS CENTERED IN UNEP, AS HE DESIRED, ALTHOUGH IT DID NOT GO SO FAR AS HE WISHED ON FINANCIAL MEASURES. FOR US, CONFERENCE ESTABLISHED POSSIBILITY OF STRONG, EFFECTIVE UNEP LEADERSHIP AND INTERNATIONAL ACTION IN DESERTIFICATION AREA, TOGETHER WITH A CAUTIONARY NOTE ON THE FINANCIAL SIDE. IT WILL NOW BE UP TO THE UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL AND THE UNGA TO OVERSEE THE FUTURE CONDUCT OF TOLBA AND UNEP IN THE AREA OF DESERTIFICATION. IN ANY CASE, TOLBA INCLUDED IN HIS CLOSING STATEMENT A STRONG PLEDGE TO THE CONFERENCE TO RESPECT UNEP'S CHARTER

IN ANY FUTURE ACTIVITIES(I.E., TO LIMIT ITS
FUNCTION TO CATALYZING AND COORDINATING).
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
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Control Number: n/a
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Sent Date: 10-Sep-1977 12:00:00 am
Decapton Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decapton Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Disposition Remarks:
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Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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Retention: 0
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Review Exemptions: n/a
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